

THE FOURTH DAY.

25th February, 1926.

The Assembly met again at 11-30 A. M. on Thursday, the 25th February, 1926.

49. Improvement of Agriculture.

MR. P. ALEXANDER (*Member, Kunnattur taluk*) said that, in the matter of cultivation, the financial return to the cultivator should not be the sole concern; the more paramount interests of the State and its food supply should receive adequate recognition. Rice is the staple food and neither rubber nor the inflated price it might fetch could take its place. The importance of conserving paddy cultivation cannot be over-estimated. Lands fit for cultivation were in places deteriorating or becoming unsuited for the purpose owing to neglect and lack of proper investigation. Local knowledge would be more helpful in reclaiming such lands than mere expert opinion. It was not the creation of appointments that was necessary for the development of agriculture, but the effective organisation of the experience and enthusiasm of local agriculturists for practical purposes. Travancore was importing every year more than Rs. 2 crores worth of paddy and rice. By the wide and judicious use of manure in Japan, the crop-bearing capacity of lands was being steadily maintained and poor soils were being brought into fertility. Many articles which could be used in Travancore as manure, such as fish, laurel *punnac*, marotti *punnac* and other oil cakes, were now being freely exported to foreign countries without payment of any considerable duty. While Travancore was exporting 1.5 million cwts. of such articles in a year, Japan imported £. 1.25 million worth of oil cakes alone in 1903 against £. 35,000 worth in 1891. Everything possible should be done towards conserving manures. Human excreta and fish should be more freely used for manurial purposes. Annually, about 2,00,000 cwts. of fish were exported from the country. "Waste nothing", should, as in Japan, be the watchword in regard to manure. There were extensive areas, for instance in the Kunnattur taluk, included within the reserve with little value for the purposes of the forest conservancy, which could with advantage be made green-leaf manure farms. Free passes should, as an alternative, be issued for the collection of green leaf manure.

Agricultural loans were not doing the maximum good in the directions intended by the Government. They were issued to men of influence and often for purposes foreign to the Rules. The loans should be issued through the agency of taluk committees. Rules regarding the assignment of *puduvals* to adjoining owners and the prohibition of registry of communal *porambores* such as *chiras*, canals and tanks were being freely violated to the detriment of agriculture. Paddy fields should continue as paddy fields; and facilities should be afforded to ryots. The formation of taluk boards consisting of officials and non-officials for these and allied agricultural purposes forming part of the Agricultural Department would be highly beneficial.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Alexander, all that you said was extremely interesting and instructive. The Government are at one with you in desiring that the agricultural development of this country should proceed apace. As you point out, the well-being of this country depends largely on agriculture and nothing should be omitted which can preserve and foster the agricultural industry. In the matter of loans, your suggestions will be carefully considered, as also what you proposed as regards the improvement of the constitution of the department.

50. Condition of the ryots of Central Travancore.

MR. K. G. THOMAS (*Member, Mavelikara taluk*) said that, in 1100, 7 lakhs of acres of land were under paddy cultivation, 5 lakhs under cocoanut and 4 lakhs under tapioca. The output of paddy was 2.25 lakhs of tons and the quantity imported was